

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 /026 W

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O 061220Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3478

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14378

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET, IT

SUBJ: KAGNEW FOUR

REF: (A) STATE 236485; (B) ROME 14270; (C) ROME 14356

SUMMARY: ESSENCE OF REFTEL HAS BEEN PASSED TO MFA AT WORKING LEVEL AND WILL BE EMPHASIZED BY AMBASSADOR TO SECGEN MANZINI ON OCTOBER 7. PREPARATORY TO THAT MEETING, EMBASSY REQUIRES FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FROM DEPARTMENT.
END SUMMARY.

1. ESSENTIAL POINTS OF REF. A PASSED TO RACHELE EVENING OCTOBER 3, WHO UNDERTOOK TO PASS THEM TO HIS SUPERIORS.

2. AMBASSADOR PLANS USE PRIORLY SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT WITH SECGEN MANZINI EVENING OF OCTOBER 7 TO REVIEW AND EMPHASIZE STRENGTH OF US COMMITMENT TO POLICY OF REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE OR BARGAIN WITH TERRORISTS.

3. AMBASSY BELIEVES THAT MANZINI'S INFORMATION (REF. B) CONCERNING UPCOMING (OCTOBER 9) ROME VISIT BY PERSONS WHOM WE ASSUME TO BE REPRESENTATIVES OF ELF/PLF WAS PROVIDED THROUGH SPECIAL CHANNEL BY SID OFFICE IN BEIRUT AND THAT AS OF LATE OCTOBER 3 MANZINI HAD NOT PASSED INFO DOWN TO RECHELE'S LEVEL (REF C.) EMBASSY
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THEREFORE CONTINUES TO OPERATE ON ASSUMPTION THAT MEETING

WILL TAKE PLACE AND THAT MANZINI WILL WANT TO BE FAMILIAR WITH MOST SLIENT ASPECTS OF USG POLICY PRIOR TO THAT MEETING.

4. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTED FROM ALL REPORTS (AT LEAST THOSE WHICH WE HAVE SEEN) THAT GOI ARGUMENTATION WITH ELF/PLF HAS SO FAR (AND RIGHTLY WE BELIEVE) FOCUSED ON STOPPING EXECUTION. WITHOUT DOWNGRADING GOI EFFORT, WE NOTE THAT THIS ASPECT HAS BEEN RELATIVELY EASY FOR GOI, SINCE IT COMPRISSES LITTLE OR NO DRAW-DOWN ON GOI CREDIT WITH ELF/PLF WHILE IMPROVING GOI STOCK WITH USG. NEXT PROBLEM, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO US MORE DIFFICULT: TO ENGAGE GOI FULLY IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF HOSTAGES EVEN THOUGH MANZINI WILL PERCEIVE THAT HE WILL BE ARMED ONLY WITH LITTLE MORE THAN HUMANITARIAN AND PSYCHO-POLITICAL ARGUMENTS IN A NEGOTIATION WHICH, IF SUCCESSFUL, WOULD APPEAR TO LEAVE ELF/PLF EMPTY-HANDED, WITH ITS CAUSE NOT ONLY UNADVANCED BUT ACTUALLY SET BACK.

5. EMBASSY THEREFORE REQUESTS ANSWERS TO FOLLOWING QUERIES PRIOR TO 1200 ZULU OCTOBER 7:

(A) MANZINI WOULD BE UNABLE TO TELL ELF/PLF REP THAT USG REFUSES NEGOTIATIONS OR CONCESSION IN THIS CASE WITHOUT REVEALING THAT GOI HAS IN FACT BEEN IN TOUGH WITH USG. IS USG READY FOR THIS, OR DO WE EXPECT GOI TO CONTINUE REPRESENTATIONS OSTENSIBLY ONLY ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE? IF USG ROLE IS TO BE KEPT HIDDEN, HOW SHOULD MANZINI RESPOND TO A REQUEST EITHER TO PASS A MESSAGE TO USG OR TO ARRANGE DIRECT USG CONTACTS WITH ELF/PLF?

(B) GIVEN THAT USG WILL "NOT BARGAIN OR NEGOTIATE CONCESSIONS, POLITICAL OR MATERIAL, TO ACHIEVE RELEASE OF HOSTAGES" (REF A), WHAT NEW ARGUMENTS, BEYOND THOSE ALREADY IN PLAY, CAN BE MUSTERED?

(C) WHAT IS USG POLICY IN REGARD TO CONCESSIONS, MATERIAL OR MONETARY, WHICH MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FROM NON-USG SOURCES? (WE CONSIDER THIS LIKELY NOT RELEVANT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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KAGNEW FOUR, BUT TANZANIAN/ZAIRIAN CASE MAY RAISE QUESTION IN MANZINI'S MIND.)

(D) MANZINI MAY WANT TO KNOW WHETHER WE ARE ALSO IN CONTACT WITH ELF/PLF VIA OTHER CHANNELS. IF SO, WHAT FEEDBACK ARE WE GETTING. WHAT IS EXTENT TO WHICH (IF ANY) ICRC IS INVOLVED (STATE 223519)?

(E) WHAT IS EHTIOPIAN GOVERNMENT DOING TO HELP?

6. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THAT, IF USG OBJECTIVE (BEYOND PRIMARY ONE OF UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE) IS TO ATTENUATE THE TALKS WHILE KEEPING CHANNELS OPEN, WE MAY NOT BE READY AT THIS TIME TO BE FULLY RESPONSIVE TO ALL ABOVE POTENTIAL MANZINI QUERIES. EVEN SO, BELIEVE EMBASSY SHOULD BE FOREARMED WITH REPLIES, WITH CAVEATS AS TO WHEN THEY MIGHT BE BROUGHT INTO USE, TO ALLOW MOST PROMPT ACTION IF AND WHEN REQUIRED.

7. COMMENT: WE DO NOT NOW NECESSARILY ASSUME THAT GOI/MANZINI WILL BE TOTALLY RESPONSIVE TO REQUESTS WE MIGHT MAKE OF THEM. OUR ARGUMENTATION SHOULD TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLY CREATE PERCEPTION OF A LINK BETWEEN UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE AND ITALIAN SELF-INTEREST.

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